

10/562,042

REMARKS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the Examiner's Amendments placing claims 21-40 in condition for allowance.

The Applicant respectfully requests entry of the above amendments to clarify the disclosure of this application. It is respectfully solicited by the Applicant that the Primary Examiner recommend entry and the Commissioner approve the same without withdrawing this case from issue. As this Amendment After Allowance is being filed prior to payment of the issue fee, no petition or official fee is believed necessary.

With regard to the above requested amendments and in relation to the previously applied cited reference of Pontbriand '287, the Applicant submits the following remarks.

The allowed claims, specifically independent claim 21, mistakenly limits the first pivot articulation 12 so as to facilitate both yaw movement and rolling movement, whereas the second articulation 21 was limited to facilitate only pitch movement. In view of the disclosure, these limitations are inaccurate for the reasons briefly summarized below.

As best seen in Figs. 4, 8 and 9, the second articulation 21 comprises two embodiments of an axle 23 and a ball/socket joint 29, 30.

In one embodiment seen in Fig. 4 the axle 23 is laterally supported and fixed between two brackets 20 which are fixed to the first articulation 12. An inner ring 30 of the ball/socket joint is laterally fixed to this axle 23 and has an outer convex surface. An outer ring 29 of the ball/socket joint is laterally fixed to the tenon 22 and has an inner concave surface. The mating concave and convex surfaces of the rings 29, 30 facilitate pitch movement about a first horizontal axis (along the axle 23) and rolling movement about a second horizontal axis (normal to the first axis) in the second articulation 21.

With regard to the embodiment of Fig. 4, it should be noted that the tenon 22 is laterally sandwiched between inner planar surfaces of the brackets 20 which are fixed to the first articulation 12. The tenon 22 has convex surfaces 33 (best seen in Figs. 2, 3 and 7) that contact inner planar surfaces of the brackets 20. The communication between the convex surfaces 33 of tenon 22 and the planar surfaces of the brackets 20 when combined with the movements facilitated by the ball/socket joint 29, 30 allow pitch and rolling movements between the tenon 22 and the brackets 20, while at the same time prevent yaw movement between the tenon 22 and the brackets 20. As such, the yaw movement between motor vehicle 1 and the trailer 2 passes through second articulation 21 to the first articulation 12, which facilitates the yaw movement (paragraphs [065] - [070]).

4/7/2009 11:37 AM

10/562,042

In a similar manner, the embodiment of Figs. 8 and 9 includes the axle 23 laterally supported and sandwiched between two brackets 20 which are fixed to the first articulation 12. Further, the inner ring 30 of the ball/socket joint is laterally fixed to the axle 23 and has an outer concave surface. The outer ring 29 of the ball/socket joint is laterally fixed to the tenon 22 and has an inner concave surface. Similar to the prior embodiment, the mating concave and convex surfaces of the rings 29, 30 facilitate pitch movement about a first horizontal axis (along the axle 23) and rolling movement about a second horizontal axis (normal to the first axis) in the second articulation 21..

Instead of the communication between the convex surfaces 33 of the tenon 22 and the planar surfaces of the brackets 20 as seen in the prior embodiment, the tenon 22 of this second embodiment includes a finger 34 which is pivotally received by a collar 35. The collar 35 includes planar surfaces 37 that abut planar surfaces 38 of wedges 39 which are fixed to the first articulation 12 (as best seen in Fig. 8). The communication between the planar surfaces 37 of the collar 35 and the planar surfaces of the wedges 38 fixed to the brackets 20 when combined with the movements facilitated by the ball/socket joint 29, 30 allow pitch and rolling movements between the tenon 22 and the brackets 20, while at the same time prevent yaw movement between the tenon 22 and the brackets 20. As such, the yaw movement between motor vehicle 1 and the trailer 2 passes through second articulation 21 to the first articulation 12, which facilitates the yaw movement (paragraphs [075] - [078]).

With regard to the applied reference, Pontbriand '287 may arguably teach one articulation that allows pitch and rolling movements, perhaps along pin 44. Distinct from the claims of the application, Pontbriand '287 teaches another articulation along bolt 24 that would not only enable yaw movement but would also enable rolling movement. Referring to Fig. 4 and column 2, lines 14-40 of Pontbriand '287, the plates 36, 38, which are fixed in relation to what may arguably be described as first articulation, sandwich a plate 10 which is fixed in relation to the trailer. As such, a second articulation could arguably be found along the bolt 24. The plates 10, 36 and 38 of the stabilizer are bolted together by means of a nut 26 and a bolt 24. The stabilizer also includes a spring 30 bolted above the plates 10, 36 and 38 which is supposed to provide a predetermined compression between the plates 10, 36 and 38. In this manner the plates 10, 36 and 38 compress friction rings 18, 20 so as to buffer yaw movement. However, as concluded from Pontbriand '287 (col. 2, Ins. 21-24) the nut 26 and bolt 24 should not be tightened such that the spring 30 is completely compressed and rotation between the plates 10,

4/7/09 11:07 AM

10/562,042

36 and 38 is prohibited. In other words, the spring 30 should compress the plates, not the nut 26 and the bolt 24 and such compression should be limited.

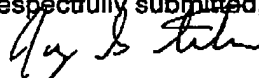
Due to the fact that the plates 10, 36 and 38 are at least somewhat axially loose with respect to each other, the Applicant contends that this articulation (along the bolt 24) not only allows yaw movement between the plates 10, 36 and 38 but also a degree of rolling movement too. This is contrary to the present claims which limit one articulation facilitating "only pivotal yaw movement" and the other articulation facilitating "only pitch movement and rolling movement".

As the limitations of a "coupling comprising a first pivot articulation (12) . . . which facilitates only pivotal yaw movement between a motor vehicle (1) and a trailer (2) . . . and a second articulation (21) . . . to facilitate both pitch movement and rolling movement between the motor vehicle (1) and the trailer (2)" have previously been claimed and considered, the Applicant respectfully asserts that no the current amendments should not require further search and consideration by the Examiner. Therefore the Applicant believes the above claim amendments and limitations should be considered and allowed over the cited reference of Pontbriand '287.

If any further amendment to this application is believed necessary, the Examiner is courteously solicited to contact the undersigned representative of the Applicant to discuss the same. If necessary, this case will be withdrawn from issue in order to enter the necessary amendment(s).

In the event that there are any fee deficiencies or additional fees are payable, please charge the same or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account (Account No. 04-0213).

Respectfully submitted,



Jay S. Franklin, Reg. No. 54,105

Customer No. 020210

Davis & Bujold, P.L.L.C.

112 Pleasant Street

Concord, NH 03301-2931

Telephone 603-226-7490

Facsimile 603-226-7499

E-mail: patent@davisandbujold.com